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Viewing cable 09ISLAMABAD106, SCENESETTER FOR CENTCOM GENERAL PETRAEUS

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09ISLAMABAD106**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09ISLAMABAD106	2009-01-17 12:03	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Islamabad

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.ndtv.com/video/player/india-decides-9-pm/pak-feared-indian-armys-cold-start-wikileaks/201113>

VZCZCXRO9685
OO RUEHLH RUEHPW
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RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 0896
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 5493
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 000106

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/16/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR CENTCOM GENERAL PETRAEUS

¶1. (C) Summary. Pakistan has now acknowledged the Mumbai attacker in Indian custody is a Pakistani and has begun a formal investigation designed to lead to prosecution of detained Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamaat-ud-Dawa members here. President Zardari and Prime Minister Gilani need to be encouraged to quickly address Indian doubts about the GOP commitment to prosecute. You will hear genuine concern from the Pakistani military about Indian military moves along the Kashmir Line of Control and the GOI ability to launch an attack without warning. Chief of Army Staff Kayani and the civilian leaders will want to hear from you a continued USG commitment to provide equipment for the Frontier Corps and police, COIN-related assistance for the internally displaced population that fled military action, and enhanced military coordination along the border as the U.S. increases force levels in Afghanistan. Through SOC training for the Frontier Corps, we continue to make significant progress in improving military coordination and cooperation along the Pak-Afghan border. Internally, Ambassador would like to review plans for a DOD Program of Record for Pakistan, the F-16 program, and the JSAT theater-wide review. End Summary.

Political Atmosphere

¶2. (C) President Zardari continues to be the primary civilian decision-maker in the GOP; while Prime Minister Gilani is frustrated by this fact, he has little room to challenge the man who gave him the job. After Gilani's ill-advised and hasty decision to fire National Security Advisor Durrani, the President and the PM have publicly mended fences but some tension between them still exists. Beyond personalities, there is a larger institutional struggle with political overtones. Nawaz Sharif is introducing legislation to reverse Musharraf-era constitutional amendments that shifted power from the Prime Minister to the President. Zardari would like to retain key presidential prerogatives, including the power to dissolve the National Assembly and appoint the military service chiefs and the governors.

¶3. (C) According to a recent IRI poll, opposition leader Nawaz Sharif's approval rating has risen to 83%, while Zardari's has fallen to around 20%. This is largely due to continued (although declining) food inflation, growing underemployment, and pervasive electricity blackouts that have led to some rioting across the country. Pakistan is meeting most of its IMF targets and the economy has begun to stabilize; a Donors' Conference to seek an estimated \$4 billion in additional support is tentatively scheduled for March. Politically, Zardari is moving to shore up his position in parliament and consolidate his hold on power by bringing additional parties into the coalition.

Mumbai Aftermath

¶4. (C) Zardari is convinced the Mumbai attacks were designed to both undermine his proposals to extend rapprochement with India and convince Pakistan to weaken its commitment to fighting militants in FATA by reinforcing the Pakistan military's focus on the Indian threat. While the transfer of 5,000-7,000 Pakistani Army troops from FATA to the Indian border was largely token, it demonstrated the Army's need to respond to its existential enemy.

¶5. (C) Both Pakistan and India continue to misread each other's signals in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks. The GOP decision (six weeks after the event) to admit that Mumbai attacker Ajmal Kasab was Pakistani and to open a formal investigation leading to prosecution of detained suspects in Pakistan was welcomed by India and hopefully will defuse bilateral tensions. However, the Indians are not convinced of Pakistan's commitment to prosecute those responsible, and the GOI continues to press for extradition that Pakistan will not support.

¶6. (C) Both sides have moved some conventional and strategic forces to the Kashmir and Punjab border areas, and Pakistan is convinced that India has the capability to execute its "Cold Start" doctrine without warning. The

ISLAMABAD 00000106 002 OF 003

Pakistani military clearly sees Indian force movements as threatening, but the civilian leadership appears to believe there is no urgency in responding to India's need for some concrete Pakistani movement against those responsible for Mumbai. UK FM Miliband came away from his recent visit to India worried that the Indians feel a military strike of some kind against Pakistan will be inevitable. Both COAS General Kayani and President Zardari have stated flatly to Ambassador that the GOP would have no choice but to retaliate if attacked, and post has no doubt they are sincere.

¶7. (C) The GOP is struggling to come to grips with the consequences of an attack that exposed ISI's decades-old policy of creating and supporting Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) as a proxy force in Kashmir. The GOP has arrested or held 124 LeT and Jamaat-ud-Dawa leaders, closed some camps, and cooperated in listing LeT members in the UN's 1267 Committee. Interior Minister Malik has agreed to quiet FBI participation in the investigation task force, and post continues to seek CIA/FBI access to Pakistani LeT/JUD detainees. Zardari and Interior Minister Malik are clear that they intend to bring to justice those responsible in Pakistan, but they stress these were non-state actors. However, GOP leaders have expressed concern that, to date, they do not have sufficient evidence to prosecute and that India's continued high-profile rhetoric is reducing the political space for the GOP to cooperate.

¶8. (C) Although India appears convinced of GOP involvement, there is no smoking gun tying the Mumbai LeT operation to ISI. ISI DG Pasha has been cooperative in both giving the U.S. information about ISI interrogations of its detainees and allowing this information to be shared with India. Reversing the GOP/ISI mindset on the use of Kashmir proxies, however, will require time and a concerted effort by the military's leadership. It is too soon to tell if the GOP's cooperation represents a new long-term policy.

IDP's /Deteriorating Security

¶9. (C) During his meeting January 10 with Senator Biden, Kayani raised five times his concern about conditions faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) who fled fighting in Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies (FATA). There currently are about 50,000 IDPs in camps in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and more than 200,000 IDPs living outside of camps living with relatives in NWFP and Swat. While the USG is providing assistance through UN agencies, there are serious food distribution problems. We have engaged the appropriate international agencies to ensure they are working to resolve these issues so that IDP conditions do not undermine Kayani's COIN operations. Through DOD humanitarian relief programs, we are reaching some communities in the FATA; USAID continues to provide non-food assistance and small-scale development projects in FATA and NWFP.

¶10. (C) Both Zardari and Kayani have openly admitted to us that the GOP has lost control of Swat in NWFP to local militants who are imposing classic Taliban-style rule. Women have been told they may not enter the bazaars, and families will keep girls out of school in the face of threats against them. Hunger and unemployment are growing, and currently only ICRC is able to deliver limited assistance in the area. After several beheadings of policemen, the NWFP police are refusing duty or deserting rather than serve in Swat, leaving virtually no law enforcement presence in the area. Both the civilian and military leadership have assessed that, for now at least, Swat is too difficult to tackle given limited military and police forces, ongoing military operations in

FATA, and the focus on the Indian border. Fighting in Bajaur continues at a lower winter-level rate.

¶11. (C) Post is providing vehicles and protective vests for the Frontier Corps and the NWFP police; we have received authority to spend another \$15 million for the police and are coordinating with the UK on a needs assessment for the NWFP police. Improving basic law enforcement capability will be a critical component to implementing any viable COIN strategy in the border area. Kayani has yet to articulate how he would fill the hold piece of COIN strategy; ideally, the Frontier Corps would take on that role, but they are serving as the primary fighting force to seize areas from the militants.

ISLAMABAD 00000106 003 OF 003

Military Cooperation

¶12. (C) Thanks to the support of the Frontier Corps, U.S./ISAF trucks are again moving through an increasingly troubled Khyber Agency to Afghanistan. We continue to make exponential progress in working with the Frontier Corps through SOC forward trainers, who are moving the program to the Warsak Training Center and should resume training in February. We expect the new ISR cooperation at the Torkham Border Coordination Center to be operational by the end of the month. The Pakistan Air Force has expanded its requests for Close Air Support training at the February 16-27 Falcon Talon Exercise. We have responded to their request for additional ammunition and are working to provide helicopter maintenance and spare parts for the Army's Cobra and MI-17 helicopters.

¶13. (C) Despite repeated requests, Pakistan has yet to provide the increased documentation required to process the GOP's May claim for Coalition Support Funds. Pakistan has yet to make the December payment due for the purchase of new F-16 aircraft and has requested that more of the program be paid through IMF. Given current economic constraints, post does not believe that Pakistan can afford the \$2 billion required to fully fund the F-16 program. We have to present the new U.S. administration with a proposal on the way forward for this symbol of renewed post 9/11 cooperation.
PATTERSON